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SUBJECT: EMBOFFS MEET WITH ALLEGED FRETILIN "SECRET SECURITY" FORCE

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CLASSIFIED BY: Grover Joseph Rees, Ambassador, EXEC, State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary. U.S. Embassy and United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) PolOffs met today with the leaders of the "Fretilin Secret Security" force in their mountaintop compound outside of Liquica. The group, comprised entirely of former Falintil resistance fighters, showed PolOffs the weapons given to the group at the order of Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and Minister of the Interior Rogerio Lobato. Railos, the leader of the group, stated that the group was established soon after the April 28 demonstrations to act as a hit squad assigned to kill petitioners, certain opposition party members, disloyal Fretilin partisans, and anti-Alkatiri Church officials. They first showed these weapons publicly several days ago in a widely-broadcast ABC Australia story. Railos indicated that the group is ready to disarm, but will only hand over the arms to President Gusmao. The group claims there is at least one other armed pro-Fretilin group in the western districts. An Embassy source reports that a number of Fretilin members have told him they knew about the arming of the Railos group several weeks ago. End summary.

12. (C) Political officers from the U.S. Embassy and UNOTIL traveled to a remote mountain village two hours west of Dili yesterday to meet with a group of former veterans who identify themselves as the "Fretilin Secret Security" force. The group of 31 men is currently staying on the compound of former Indonesian-era Governor, Mario Carascalao, who is also a prominent opposition party leader.

13. (C) Railos, former Falilintil resistance fighter from the Liquica area and the leader of this new force, provided PolOffs with a chronology of the group's establishment and its contacts with senior GOET officials. During the meeting, he was accompanied by a former local staff member of UNDP's Dili office and by Dr. Lucas da Costa, who is President of one of East

Timor's largest private universities and one of the few Fretilin delegates to vote against Alkatiri in the recent Fretilin Party Congress.

14. (S/REL AUS/NZ/UK) According to Railos, on May 5 at around 8 p.m. he received a call from then Minister of the Interior Rogerio Lobato. Lobato told Railos to gather former Falintil fighters at the district Fretilin Party office in Liquica. Railos said approximately 100 veterans attended the meeting and that because of the size of the group Lobato refrained from providing specific details about the armed groups he wanted to create, but that Lobato did ask the men to "cooperate with the Government to create stability." Railos claims he was contacted the next day by Lobato and asked to come to Dili as soon as possible. Railos, accompanied by fellow veterans Harakat and Leandro Lobato (Note: All three of these men were later delegates at the Fretilin Party Congress), went to Lobato's house in Dili on the evening of May 7. After spending 15 minutes with Lobato, Railos reports that the group was taken down the street to the temporary residence of Prime Minister Alkatiri where they met in a secure room with the PM, Minister Lobato, and Border Patrol Unit (BPU) Commander Antonio da Cruz. The Prime Minister did not outline his "mission" for the group during this meeting, but after speaking to them for a few moments about the importance of being a dedicated member of Fretilin and reminding them how the party needs them now more than ever to win the 2007 elections, Alkatiri reportedly told Lobato "I think we can trust them with the equipment now."

15. (S/REL AUS/NZ/UK) Railos reports that on May 8 he and his men were given ten HK33 automatic rifles by BPU Commander da Cruz. A few hours later, he said he was called by Lobato and given the following mission: a) "deal" with the petitioners to ensure they do not return to Dili and threaten the Alkatiri Government; b) eliminate certain opposition leaders including Democratic Party (PD) Secretary-General Fernando Lasama de Araujo and the PD district co-ordinator for Liquica; and c) shoot anti-Alkatiri members of Fretilin such as Lucas da Costa and eliminate "radical priests" like Father Domingos Soares ("Padre Maubere"), who was central in the organization of the

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anti-Alkatiri Church-led demonstration of May 2005. (Comment: Railos spoke far more extensively about his instructions to kill certain key members of the group of petitioners than about the other elements of his alleged mission. Both U.S. Embassy and UNOTIL PolOffs believe it is possible that instructions for dealing with the other targets may have been fabricated for consumption by the foreign press. On the other hand, these instructions could have been delivered to the group with a lower level of detail than the instructions regarding the petitioners, or could have been described to them as secondary assignments to be carried out after the operation against the petitioners. End comment.)

16. (S/REL AUS/NZ/UK) Railos and his group conducted no operations during the first two weeks after they were given the arms, although he did say he was in frequent contact with Lobato and also spoke on occasion with the Prime Minister. Railos reports that on May 21 BPU Commander da Cruz provided them with an additional seven HK33s and one shotgun. Sources indicate that these weapons likely came from BPU officers from the East who had abandoned their posts along the land border to return home.

17. (S/REL AUS/NZ/UK) According to Railos, on May 23 when violence broke out between Major Reinado's group of dissident MPs and the Timorese military (F-FDTL), Minister Lobato, upon hearing rumors that the petitioners would come down from Gleno to attack Government forces, called Railos and asked that he and his men proceed to Tibar (a few miles to the west of Dili) to "deal with the petitioners". Railos and his group put on the green striped uniforms given to them by Lobato and used the two GOET vehicles they had also been given to travel to Tibar. Once in Tibar, Railos claims he realized that most of the petitioners were from the same area as his men and many of them were distant

relatives or friends. Thus, Railos claims he and his men simply warned the petitioners against going to Dili and convinced most of them to return to Ermera district. Railos and his group, however, remained in Tibar and also claim to have dissuaded several youth gang members from going closer to Dili. (Note: An EmbOff who passed through Tibar on the afternoon of May 23 has confirmed that he saw a group that fits the description of Railos and his men, with the same distinctive uniforms and weapons.) In the fight that ensued at daybreak on May 24 between the F-FDTL and dissident forces, Railos' group lost four men. Railos said the bodies were recovered by the Red Cross on May 25 and were then taken back to Liquica and buried.

¶18. (S/REL AUS/NZ/UK) Railos says he had several phone conversations with Lobato and at least one with Alkatiri after the events of May 24. Railos and his group were extremely angry over the lack of sympathy from Alkatiri and Lobato over the loss of the four men. According to Railos, the two GOET leaders were initially upset with his group for having failed to kill the leaders of the group of petitioners, but in subsequent telephone conversations tried to convince Railos that he and his group were still central to Fretilin's plans. Railos said it was out of anger at this lack of sympathy that he contacted the journalist from ABC Australia to come and interview him and view his group's weapons. Since the ABC story aired, Railos has had no contact with Alkatiri or Lobato. (Comment: PolOffs believe there might have been another reason why this group quickly turned against Alkatiri and Lobato. It is possible that they were promised money or some other form of compensation that was not delivered when the group failed to carry out Lobato's instructions in Tibar.)

¶19. (C) When questioned about what conditions his group was placing on disarming, Railos stated that he wanted to speak directly to President Gusmao and would only hand over his group's weapons if he could do so directly to the President. He also requested that the town of Liquica where most of his men live be patrolled by an international force, as they fear retaliation from Alkatiri and Lobato. (Comment: News of this group's whereabouts is widespread in Dili, and the compound

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where they were staying did not appear well protected.)

¶10. (C) Railos concluded by stating that his group is not the only one of its kind. He claims there is also another pro-Fretilin armed group in Ermera, known as Group 5-5, which was allegedly given between 12 and 16 weapons from the Timorese police (PNTL) armory by then-Minister Lobato's chief of staff.

¶11. (C) EmbOff met today with Dionisio Babo Soares, a member of the Superior Council on Defense and Security, and with Agio Pereira, President Gusmao's Chief of Staff, to discuss the Railos group. Soares stated that various moderate members of Fretilin had informed him that they had known for several weeks about the arming of this group. The President's Chief of Staff told EmbOff that Railos had contacted him early in the morning on May 24. Railos reportedly called to report the death of four of his men to the President. Pereira suggested that if this group was indeed armed by the Prime Minister, he would face "serious legal consequences." Although Pereira did not mention to EmbOffs the possibility that the President would dismiss Prime Minister Alkatiri on account of this matter, the President himself suggested this possibility to Ambassador in a recent conversation that will be reported in septel.

REES